

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS



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The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) introduced a new approach and vision for transportation planning. This approach emphasized enhancing the transportation system's efficiency, monitoring and improving of its performance, and ensuring that future investments reflect consideration of economic, environmental, and quality-of-life impacts. ISTEA introduced a comprehensive, long-range approach that incorporates the coordination and consideration of all modes and those elements that impact these modes.

Under this program, Kentucky submitted its first formal *Statewide Transportation Plan* (STP) in 1995 and its first formal *Statewide Transportation Improvement Program* (STIP) in 1992. However, Kentucky has prepared an informal STIP document since the 1970s. Kentucky has developed processes, which facilitate the transportation program development in Kentucky utilizing the ISTEA planning process. Beginning in 1995 Kentucky established a statewide transportation planning process that includes the Highway District Offices (HDOs), the Area Development Districts (ADDs), Regional Transportation Committees, County Judges and/or other county officials, City Mayors and public involvement committees. The *Statewide Transportation Plan* is developed with an emphasis on public involvement, coordination with other state agencies and regional planning agencies, and cooperation and consultation with local governments.

In June of 1998, Congress passed the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). TEA-21 continued and confirmed the statewide transportation planning process, established under ISTEA, as the primary mechanism for cooperative transportation decision making in the Commonwealth. TEA-21 further emphasized the coordination of statewide planning with metropolitan planning, the consultation with local elected officials in non-metropolitan areas in the development of the Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP, and continued public involvement. TEA-21 also added representatives of transit users and freight suppliers to the list of entities given an opportunity to comment on transportation plans and programs and strengthens the language concerning the intermodal nature of the state transportation system as an integral part of the national intermodal system.

The statewide planning process produces two key products: the *Statewide Transportation Plan* (STP) and the *Statewide Transportation Improvement Program* (STIP). The *Statewide Transportation Plan* presents a long-range (20-year) vision that considers all factors regardless of funding levels or transportation investments. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program is a short-range document, which lists the projects to be advanced in the next three years with the appropriate federal agencies. Kentucky's current STIP was completed in November of 1998. The STP should encompass and consider numerous operational, maintenance, expansion and technological investment options; but, basically the Plan should be or include the following aspects: long-range (at least 20 years), linked to economic goals of the state, linked to environmental objectives, coordinated with all modes and transportation providers, intermodal, performance-oriented, participatory, realistic and fiscally sound, and relevant to the needs of the state. Kentucky's planning process basically includes: the

identification, evaluation, and prioritization of transportation needs; coordination with MPOs and other planning agencies; coordination with the Division of Air Quality to assure compliance with the State Implementation Plan, and the public involvement process. Each of these processes will be described in this section, except for the public involvement process that is explained in the following section.

IDENTIFICATION OF UNSCHEDULED NEEDS

The Transportation Cabinet identifies transportation needs for the air transportation, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, highway transportation, public transportation, and intermodal project aspects of Kentucky's transportation system. Each of the processes is described in the following sections.

The highway element of the plan involves approximately a nine-month process. The Cabinet maintains a database of unscheduled needs, which are highway and bicycle/pedestrian projects identified by local officials, regional planning agencies, District Highway Offices, state agency officials, the transportation planning committees of the Area Development Districts (ADDs), and public citizens. The geographic distribution of the Area Development Districts, the Highway District Offices, and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations is shown in Exhibits 20, 21, and 22 respectively.

An identification of a transportation need may occur during long-range or conceptual planning when the ADD/HDO is assessing mobility and accessibility to and from existing or potential trip generators, or when the ADD/HDO is reviewing the goals of the region. Whenever a previously unidentified transportation need is recognized, the ADD/HDO provides the Cabinet with the required information on the project. The ADD contacts the appropriate Highway District Office for clarification or other pertinent information, as well as to provide the estimated cost of the project. It should be noted that this is the initial phase of the project identification, so they do not have any previous commitment of funding.

During a major update of the *Statewide Transportation Plan* (STP), a comprehensive effort to identify previously unidentified transportation needs is conducted in cooperation with the ADDs, the ADD transportation committees, the Highway District Offices (HDOs), elected officials, transportation providers and users, and the general public. The identification of new transportation needs for a major update is accomplished during a specified period set out in a schedule provided by the Cabinet. However, new projects may also be identified and submitted to the Cabinet at any time.

The unscheduled highway needs list is reconciled to each newly adopted Six Year Highway Plan to recognize project phases that have advanced into the current Six Year Highway Plan and to ensure the completion of projects begun in the Six Year Highway Plan. The unscheduled highway needs list is also noted if a specific project was included in the previous Long-Range Highway Plan.

The identification of public transportation needs is a cooperative process involving the ADDs, public transportation operators, public transportation interests groups and organizations and local government officials and agencies. The ADDs will forward any recommended needs, through the transportation committee of the ADD, to the Cabinet Central Office staff for consideration under available funding.

Project needs in the areas of air transportation, rail transportation, water transportation and intermodal projects may be identified by interest groups, local officials, public citizens, or businesses through the transportation committees of the ADDs or directly to the Cabinet's Central Office. Often projects may be identified or suggested through the Intermodal Advisory Panel. Specific projects are also identified as a result of studies conducted by the Cabinet such as the Intermodal Access and Freight Movement Study, the Kentucky Riverport Study, and the Kentucky Aviation Systems Plan Update.

EVALUATION OF NEW TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The evaluation of all new identified transportation needs is the responsibility of the ADD and the HDO. The purpose of evaluating new identified transportation needs is to assess their relative impacts on a comprehensive set of seven planning factors identified in federal regulations, plus others as deemed appropriate by the ADD and/or the Cabinet. This evaluation also provides the opportunity to provide any other pertinent information about a project that may not be specifically requested or required through other methods. The results of this evaluation will provide relevant information on the project which will assist the committees and elected officials in prioritizing these projects and will have a bearing on the relative priority assigned to each transportation need which will, in turn, affect its potential for future implementation.

ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Establishing the relative priorities for all identified and evaluated highway and bicycle/pedestrian needs from the Unscheduled Needs List for the purpose of providing input to the selection of projects for the *Statewide Transportation Plan* and the Six Year Highway Plan involves the following process:

- LOCAL PRIORITIES - First, the ADD solicits the local elected officials, responsible for a specific entity (county judge, city mayor) to establish a relative "high", "medium", or "low" local priority for each transportation need identified for their area in the Unscheduled Needs List, as provided by the Cabinet.

- REGIONAL PRIORITIES - Second, the ADD utilizes the Transportation Committees and considers the transportation need evaluations to recommend to the HDOs a relative "high", "medium", or "low" regional priority for each transportation needs project in the ADD from the Unscheduled Needs List, as provided by the Cabinet. The goal for priorities is that each priority grouping (High, Medium or Low) makes up approximately one-third of the cost of the total unscheduled needs in the ADD. The ADD then produces a list of the top ten projects (in order of importance to the region) for the region.

- DISTRICT PRIORITY - Third, the HDOs use their knowledge of the transportation system in their respective District and consider the ADDs' recommendations to establish a relative "high", "medium", or "low" district priority for each transportation need in the Unscheduled Needs List for their district. The HDOs follow the same approach in ranking the priority groups as described for the ADD above, but do not develop a "top ten" ranking of the projects. The district priorities are submitted to the Cabinet for further evaluation and prioritization.

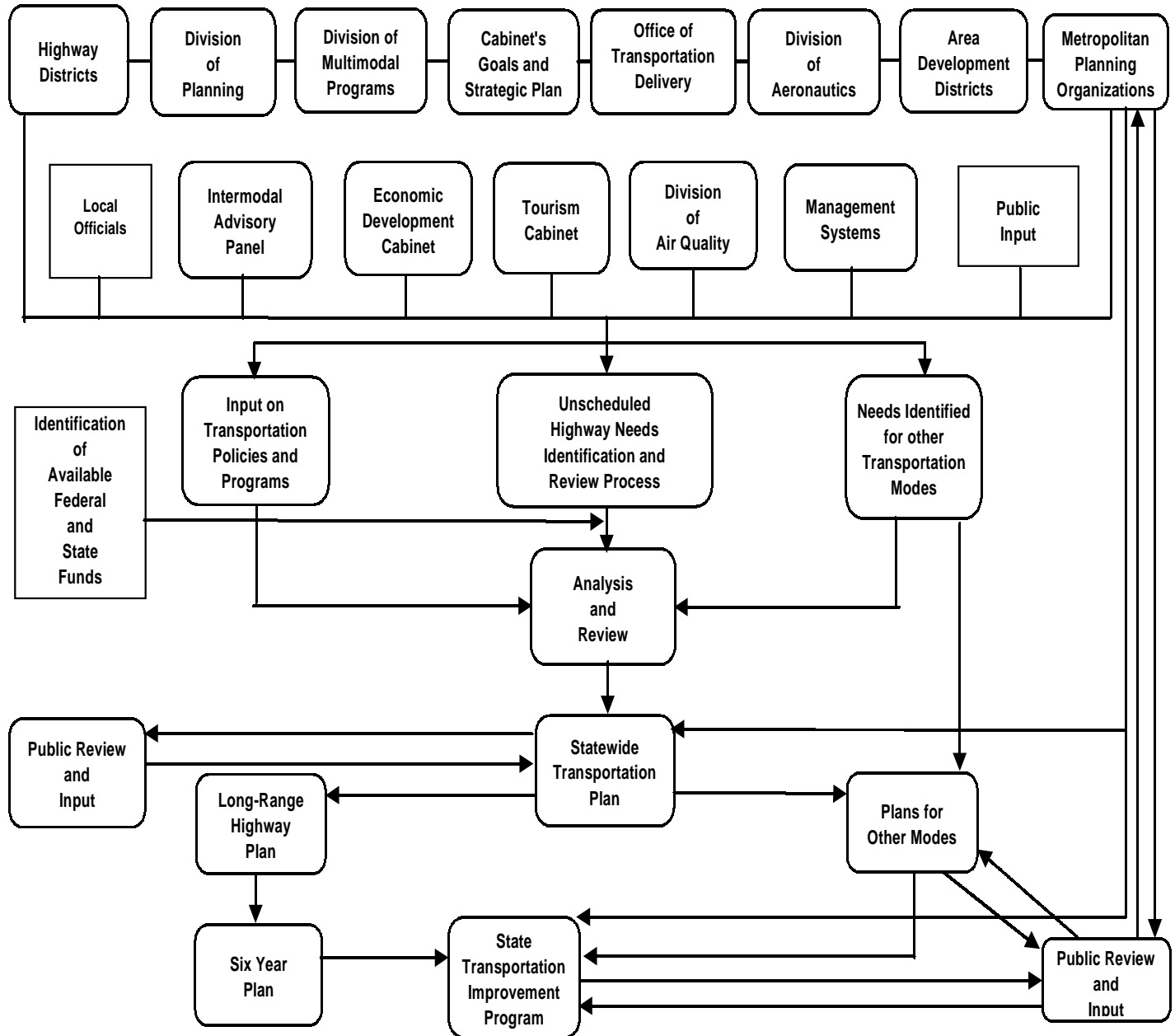
- STATEWIDE PRIORITY - Fourth, the Cabinet's Central Office uses a statewide perspective, the local, ADD and District priorities and ADD rankings, and all available pertinent resource data to establish a relative "high", "medium", or "low" statewide priority for each transportation need in the Unscheduled Needs List. The responsibility for establishing priorities for identified and evaluated transportation needs involving the other modes remains with the Cabinet Central Office. All relative priority setting is in support of the major update of the STP and update of the Six Year Highway Plan.

The Cabinet's Central Office uses a comprehensive and coordinated approach to assigning the statewide priority to all projects. First, the continuation of committed Six Year Highway Plan projects is considered and then numerous other factors: the priorities and ranking described above, previous study recommendations including, but not limited to, small urban studies (where available), adequacy ratings, connectivity considerations, parallel route improvement and economic development considerations, traffic data, truck access considerations, accident data, and other pertinent data. The process involved in assigning the statewide priority is explained in more detail in Appendix C of this document.

As described above, the selection process for projects included in the STP is based on a cooperative decision-making process between the state, regional and local officials. Figure 5.1 reflects the statewide transportation planning process in Kentucky.

FIGURE 5.1

**KENTUCKY TRANSPORTATION CABINET
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS**



COORDINATION WITH THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

The seven designated metropolitan transportation planning agencies (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) or MPOs are responsible for transportation planning within the Commonwealth's designated metropolitan areas. This includes identifying unscheduled transportation needs and setting priorities for these needs. They are also responsible for their public involvement activities, which are used in the development of their short-range implementation list (Transportation Improvement Program) and their long-range needs list (Long-Range Transportation Plan). Each MPO has its own locally adopted public involvement process. These processes have used public advertisements of notification and public information meetings to gain public input and participation. Through coordination efforts, the Transportation Improvement Program projects of each MPO are included in the Cabinet's Six Year Highway Plan. The Long-Range Transportation Plan needs (for the metropolitan areas) are included in the *Statewide Transportation Plan* (STP) by reference (see the "Presentation of Planned and Potential Improvements" section).

The Cabinet also uses a corridor planning approach to analyze groups of local highway needs which, when combined, form a strategic transportation corridor for the region, the state, or the nation. Corridor planning studies provide an analysis of needs, documentation of existing and future conditions, alternative improvement strategies, public input, estimates of cost, economic feasibility analysis as needed, implementation strategies and coordination of compatibility with other projects. Several corridors of statewide or regional significance have already been identified for further study, as shown in Exhibit 23.

Every effort has been made, within budgetary constraints, to schedule the appropriate phases of corridors identified throughout the state in this STP process so that the corridors will be completed in a timely and consistent manner. Specific corridors have been selected based on areas of the greatest need, use, and continuity across Kentucky to provide the greatest accessibility, continuity, and connectivity for the transportation of both people and goods. As shown in Exhibit 24, many of the corridors were developed to fill gaps in the state's existing Designated National Truck Network and provide accessibility to the more rural parts of the state. Providing or improving these corridors will encourage economic development in areas not previously accessible for larger commercial carriers under federal and state law. This corridor approach also ensures the completion of major corridors and not a "section by section" or "band-aid" approach to highway improvement.

The Cabinet has also considered various other highway systems, economic impact areas, and statewide development plans in determining the specific projects for the STP. The information included in the Demographics section of the STP, including economic development zones, areas of high unemployment and high civilian work force, areas with potential for economic and industrial development, and the population shifts in Kentucky were all considerations involved in the development of the STP, as well as obvious gaps in the Designated National Truck Network (NN). Exhibits 25 and 26 illustrate how the planned corridor studies are distributed across the minority and low-income population areas of the Commonwealth. Providing better access for those areas of the state which are most in need of

accessible networks for industrial and economic purposes was a major consideration in the development of the corridors and individual projects. This section has explained in detail the specific process whereby the long-range plan projects are compiled. However, the Public Involvement section will further describe how public input has influenced the selection of projects. The result is a twenty-year planning document for Kentucky that encompasses the economic goals of the entire state and provides a comprehensive corridor approach to meeting the needs of the people of Kentucky and the traveling public.

Insert Exhibit 20

Insert Exhibit 21

Insert Exhibit 22

Insert Exhibit 23

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